On the books: managing JSC's valuable information

They're called records, and almost every JSC employee creates them. They pertain to all information that the center makes or receives that relates to the management of its business.

Once ownership of JSC records is transferred to the National Archives, those that aren't classified become available to the public for reference. Actor/director Ron Howard's production staff, for example, researched JSC-originated records to create authentic replicas of such things as the inside of the command module, down to the details of what items were Velcroed to the inside of it, to produce the movie "Apollo 13."

To assist the center in tackling the job of managing its federal records, including ISO 9000 quality records, the Information Systems Directorate has assembled a new group of records management personnel.

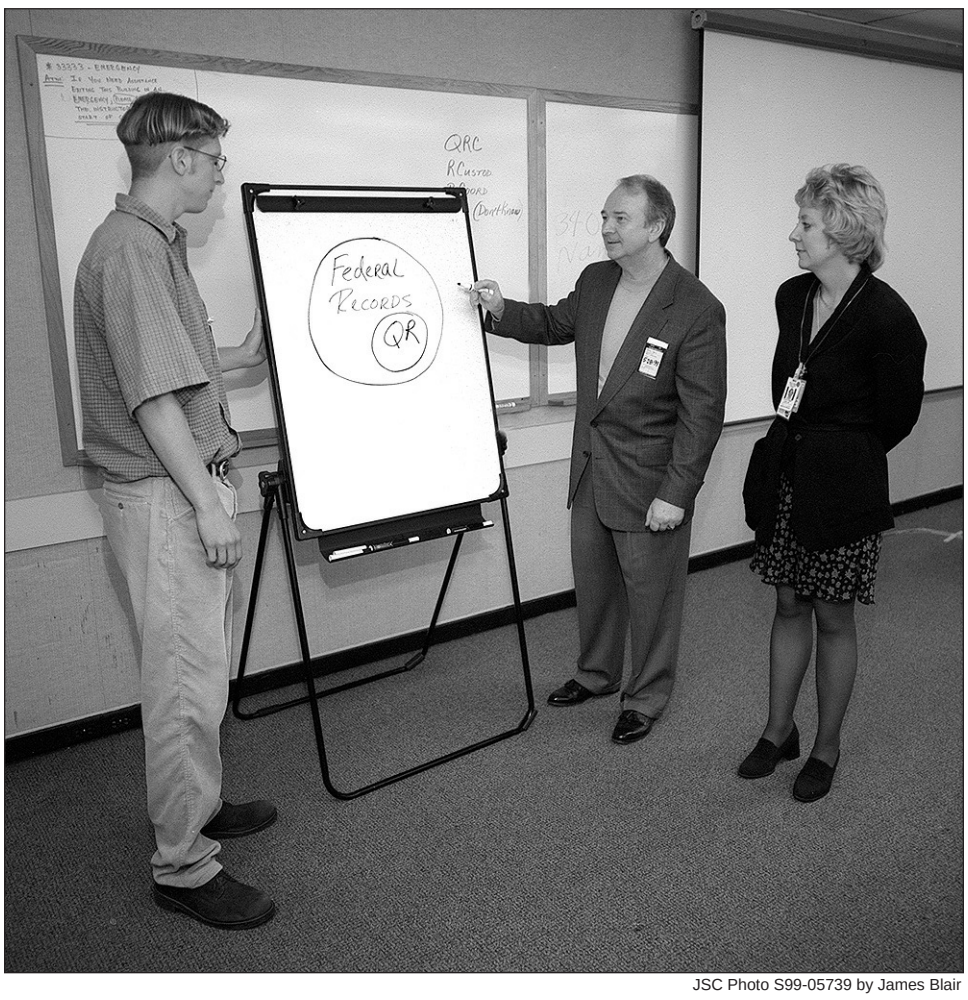
Newly appointed JSC Records Manager Patti Stockman, who has been team lead over the area for two years, says many employees don't even realize they create or have federal records in their possession. "I think it's because perhaps they've never heard of federal records, or else they don't really know what comprises a record.

"The Code of Federal Regulations, which legally mandates how we should manage them, says that all information created, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency in connection with transaction of its business as evidence of our organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities, constitutes federal records," said Stockman.

Recently, ISO 9000's emphasis on management of quality records, as well as legal spotlights on federal electronic records outside of NASA, has generated a new emphasis on control of records. But Stockman says that apart from federal, agency and ISO requirements to control JSC federal records, there are several other good reasons to do so including historical, NASA's public accountability, and sheer operational efficiency.

An example of operational efficiency at JSC is the space conservation achieved. "Since June 1, 1998, JSC has shipped 831 boxes of records in 65 different shipments to the National Archives and Records Administration's Federal Records Center in Ft. Worth, freeing up that much filing space at the center," said Stockman. The FRC basically functions as a warehouse for storing JSC records until it is time to either destroy the records or transfer ownership to the National Archives.

"On the other hand, in the same period we have made 114 separate retrievals of records stored in Ft. Worth for JSC civil servants and contractors for their reference use in ongoing work," said Stockman.



JSC Photo S99-05739 by James Blair

John Smith, director of records management for the National Archives and Records Administration – Southwest Region, explains to JSC records custodians Peter Fisher, left, and Leslie Myers, right, that ISO quality records are a subset of JSC's federal records.

Because of the significant traffic to and from the FRC, two ISD employees, Dina Berumen and Ethel Reed, facilitate all of JSC's records shipments.

Stockman, who is responsible for management oversight of the entire center records management program, focuses her attention on moving JSC forward in records management.

The JSC archivist, Mark Scroggins, assesses the record status of collections for organizations. He also assists in locating appropriate retention schedules for records.

Scroggins points out that the magnitude of JSC records, both in media and types, sometimes contributes to employees' overlooking some of their records. He emphasizes that not only are documents and drawings federal records, but also microform, audio and motion picture film, and video, as well as electronic files.

"We are required to manage all of our records, but some of those most important at JSC include most program records, unique one-of-a-kind records such as mission documents and voice tapes, as well as certain fiduciary files in the areas of finance, procurement and personnel," Scroggins said. "If employees are in doubt about whether their files are records, we'd rather they err on the side of caution."

Sometimes employees may even tend to think of some items as their personal property, particularly ones containing their own annotations. However, Scroggins points out that personal annotations often make a record more valuable and unique than clean versions of the original.

Nancy Hutchins, who has served as JSC's ISO 9000 quality records manager, was recently selected as JSC records management specialist. With a "down and in" focus, Hutchins serves as consultant to all JSC records coordinators and custodians, facilitating the smooth management of all federal records.

Last year, ISO audit identification of weaknesses in JSC's control of its records led to a successful center-wide effort to inventory, and bring under solid control, all of its quality records. According to Hutchins, this success was a major milestone on the road to improved JSC records management and contributed significantly to JSC's ISO 9000 certification.

Because of her ISO involvement, Hutchins has been responsible for training nearly 450 JSC employees and contractors since late 1997 in how to manage their records. Most were ISO quality record custodians, for whom training is mandatory. Other federal records custodians and coordinators also were included.

"Quality records are simply a subset of all our federal records and are identified as such by ISO quality requirements," said Hutchins. "All of our JSC records, whether 'quality' or not, must be managed the same."

The entire records management staff is turning its attention to leading the center in further improvements in records management. Stockman and Hutchins will be networking with major JSC contractors' records managers to inform them of changes in requirements and guidelines for managing their federal records. Hutchins also plans regular roundtable meetings with JSC records coordinators from across the center.

In addition, records management training will become a regular offering through the JSC training catalog. John Smith, director of records management at NARA-Southwest Region, has personally taught more than 200 civil servants and contractors. According to Hutchins, Smith has been exceptionally well received, with participants requesting spin-off or more frequent training.

For assistance in managing or dispositioning records, see the JSC Records Management Web site: http://stic.jsc.nasa.gov/collections/STIC_home/records/. There, employees can find policy and procedural guidance, as well as on-line forms for every record-related action. Employees may also contact Stockman at x31849. ■

Governor Bush appoints JSC technologist to key post

The full senate of the state of Texas recently confirmed the nomination of Dr. Kumar Krishen by Governor George W. Bush to the Texas Board of Licensure for Professional Medical Physicists for a five-year term. This board supports the implementation of the Texas Medical Physics Practice Act, Texas Civil Statutes, Article 4512n, concerning the regulation and licensure of medical physicists.

Dr. Krishen serves as the chief technologist for the Technology Transfer and Commercialization Office at JSC.

"Professional medical physicists support the calibration of medical instrumentation and the analysis and interpretation of medical data for physicians," said Krishen. "This appointment provides me an opportunity to serve the state of Texas in an area of importance to the quality of our lives. It also uses the experience, training, and knowledge I have gained by working at JSC."

Dr. Krishen has advanced original concepts concerning remote sensing, health systems, science payloads, sensor systems, communications and tracking systems, mission support technologies, and automation and robotics technologies through his involvement on agency, interagency, and international panels and committees. These include the

JSC Photo S99-06209 by Robert Markowitz

Dr. Kumar Krishen

NASA Council on Science and Technology, Space Technology Interdependency Group, Sensor Working Group, Microwave Working Group, Photonics Working Group, JSC Wavelet Technology Working Group, High Temperature Superconductivity Working Group, Operations Technology Working Group, In-Space Experiments Evaluation Committee, State of Texas Advanced Technology Panel, Office of Space Flight Senior Technology Team, NASA Minority Universities Technical Steering Committee, Agency Communications Working Group, U.S. National Committee Commission F of URSI, IEEE United States Activities Board, Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, JSC Small Business Innovation and Research Technical Steering Committee, and the JSC Technology Coordinating Committee.

Dr. Krishen is the postdoctoral advisor to the NASA NRC Program and doctoral advisor to the NASA Graduate Program and NASA Summer Faculty Program. Dr. Krishen has taught graduate-level courses at Kansas State University, the University of Houston, and Rice University where he served as an adjunct professor from 1986 to 1996.

Dr. Krishen is a fellow of the Society for Design and Process Science and is the recipient of many honors including medals, awards, and commendations from universities, industry, and government organizations. He is listed in *2000 Outstanding People of the 20th Century* (England), *Who's Who in the World, Men of Achievement* (United Kingdom), and several similar publications. Dr. Krishen serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Integrated Design and Process Science* and the *International Journal of Advanced Manufacturing Systems*. ■